

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 /084 W  
-----018637 291719Z /46

R 291641Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7864  
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 04950

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, GE  
SUBJECT: THE BAHRO AND HUEBNER CASES: VOICES OF  
DISSENT IN THE GDR

REF: (A) 77 BERLIN 6984, (B) 77 BERLIN 7021, (C) 77  
BERLIN 7102, (C) BERLIN 1276, (E) BERLIN 2413,  
(F) BERLIN 2492, (G) BERLIN A-18, (H) BERLIN 4408,  
(I) BERLIN 4508, (J) USBER 1625

1. SUMMARY. RUDOLF BAHRO AND NICO HUEBNER, BOTH  
RECENTLY CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO LONG PRISON TERMS,  
ARE INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLES OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE STATE  
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OF DISSENT IN THE GDR TODAY. BOTH HAVE LONG-TERM  
CONNECTIONS WITH THE PARTY AND BOTH REFLECT, IN DIFFERENT  
WAYS, DISILLUSIONMENT WITH SOCIALISM AS IT IS PRACTISED  
IN THE GDR. NEITHER REPRESENTS AN ORGANIZED OPPOSITION  
OR FUNCTIONED AS PART OF AN ORGANIZED DISSIDENT GROUP  
AND NEITHER REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF THE POPULATION AS A  
WHOLE. END SUMMARY.

2. RUDOLF BAHRO AND NICO HUEBNER, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE EXPRESSED CRITICISM OF THE REGIME OR CHALLENGED ITS POLICIES, HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO LONG PRISON TERMS IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS. BAHRO AND HUEBNER HAVE A NUMBER OF FEATURES IN COMMON WHICH ARE REVEALING ABOUT THE NATURE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN EAST GERMANY. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, NEITHER REPRESENTS AN ORGANIZATION AND BOTH ACTED ON THEIR OWN. IT REMAINS THE CONSENSUS VIEW OF MOST WESTERN OBSERVERS IN THE GDR, AND OF OUR EAST GERMAN CONTACTS, THAT NO GENUINE OPPOSITION FORCE OF MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF INDIVIDUALS EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY. THE AUTHORS OF THE SO-CALLED "MANIFESTO", PRINTED IN DER SPIEGEL IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, CLAIMED TO REPRESENT SUCH AN ORGANIZED GROUP. HOWEVER, IN OUR OPINION, THEIR CLAIM WAS MORE THE REFLECTION OF A WISH THAN A STATEMENT OF FACT. THE "MANIFESTO" ELICITED CONSIDERABLE INITIAL INTEREST HERE, BUT THIS HAS RAPIDLY FADED AND WE SEE NO EVIDENCE THAT IT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO CREATING THE ORGANIZED OPPOSITION IT CLAIMED TO REPRESENT. BAHRO AND HUEBNER, UNLIKE THE SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO", HAVE HAD A CONTINUING RESONANCE IN EAST GERMANY, BUT THEIR ADMIRERS HAVE NOT COALESCED INTO AN ORGANIZED GROUP. ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT THE CZECH CHARTER 77 AND POLISH WORKERS' DEFENSE COMMITTEES HAVE NO EQUIVALENT IN THE GDR, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND LITTLE SENSE OF ASSOCIATION SEEMS TO EXIST BETWEEN DISAFFECTED GDR INTELLECTUALS AND THEIR EAST EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS.

3. BAHRO AND TO A LESSER EXTENT HUEBNER DO REFLECT SOME OF THE DISSATISFACTION AND DISCONTENT WHICH WE BELIEVE EXISTS WITHIN THE SED ITSELF. BOTH BAHRO AND HUEBNER, IN DIFFERENT WAYS, ARE THE PRODUCT OF THE SED APPARATUS. BAHRO WAS AN SED MEMBER MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE AND, UNTIL HIS DISILLUSIONMENT WAS SPARKED BY THE CRUSHING OF THE PRAGUE SPRING, WAS NOT ONLY ON THE PARTY ROLES BUT WAS AN ACTIVE PARTY WORKER AS A JOURNALIST WITH A HIGHLY POLITICAL YOUTH JOURNAL. HUEBNER IS THE OFFSPRING OF A MODEL SED FAMILY, HIS FATHER BEING ON THE FACULTY OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING SCHOOL. IN BOTH CASES, THEIR DISILLUSIONMENT AND EVENTUAL OPPOSITION TO THE PRACTICE OF SOCIALISM IN THE GDR ILLUSTRATE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SED IN RETAINING CADRES WITH A GENUINE IDEOLOGICAL MOTIVATION. AT PRESENT WE JUDGE THAT MANY MEMBERS OF THE SED ARE PROBABLY MOTIVATED BY A COMBINATION OF OPPORTUNISM AND CYNICISM,

NOURISHED BY THE SUBSTANTIAL PROFESSIONAL AND MATERIAL REWARDS WHICH A GOOD PARTY RECORD CAN ENTAIL. IN CONTRAST TO BAHRO AND HUEBNER, MANY OF THE ARTISTS AND WRITERS WHO HAVE GOTTEN INTO TROUBLE WITH THE REGIME IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, WHILE COMMITTED MARXISTS, WERE NOT INTEGRAL TO THE PARTY APPARATUS.

4. AMONG A NUMBER OF OUR CONTACTS WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE GOOD SOCIALISTS (BUT NOT NECESSARILY SED MEMBERS) WE HAVE DETECTED A GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BERLIN 04950

WITH SOCIALISM AS PRACTICED IN THE GDR. THEY SEEM TO OBJECT TO MANY OF THE CHANGES AND COMPROMISES WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN CREATING A PRIVILEGED CLASS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. NICO HUEBNER'S YOUTHFUL DISGUST AND PESSIMISM AND RUDOLF BAHRO'S HIGHLY INTELLECTUALIZED CRITICISMS ARE AMONG THE MORE OVERT MANIFESTATIONS OF THIS TREND. IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO SAY THAT BAHRO AND HUEBNER ARE TYPICAL OF THEIR RESPECTIVE GENERATIONS IN EAST GERMAN SOCIETY; IN SIMPLE COURAGE AND EVEN

SELF-DESTRUCTIVENESS THEY FAR EXCEED THE NORM. HOWEVER,  
WE HAVE OBSERVED STRONG AND WIDE-SPREAD FEELINGS OF  
EMPATHY WITH BOTH INDIVIDUALS AMONG MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT  
PARTS OF THIS SOCIETY.  
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5. MOST OF OUR NON-SED CONTACTS REGARD THE HEAVY  
SENTENCES FOR BAHRO AND HUEBNER AS DISMAYING BUT  
PREDICTABLE. THERE APPEARS TO BE A COMMON VIEW THAT  
THE TIMING OF THESE TWO TRIALS IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
TRIALS OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS IS NO ACCIDENT AND THAT  
THE GDR IS USING THE INTENSE WESTERN PUBLICITY CONCERNING  
THE SOVIET TRIALS TO OBSCURE ITS OWN PARALLEL ACTIVITIES.  
SEVERAL OF OUR CONTACTS HAVE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT  
BAHRO WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN HIS DEFIANCE OF GDR  
AUTHORITIES FROM WITHIN PRISON AND WILL NOT SUCCUMB TO  
ANY OFFERS TO BE RANSOMED OR EXCHANGED TO THE WEST.  
THESE SOURCES REMEMBER VIVIDLY BAHRO'S STATEMENTS IN  
HIS WEST GERMAN TELEVISION INTERVIEWS SHORTLY BEFORE  
HIS ARREST THAT HIS PLACE IS IN THE GDR AND THAT HE  
WOULD REFUSE ANY ATTEMPTS TO BE SENT TO THE WEST. WHILE  
CLEARLY SYMPATHIZING WITH THE DIFFICULTIES OF HIS  
PRESENT POSITION, SEVERAL OF OUR NON-SED CONTACTS HOPE  
THAT HE WILL HAVE THE FORTITUDE TO FULFILL THIS PLEDGE.  
BAHRO'S DECISION TO APPEAL HIS SENTENCE (REPORTED IN  
THE WEST GERMAN PRESS JULY 19) SUGGESTS THAT HE IS  
REMAINING STEADFAST FOR THE TIME BEING. WE HAVE NOT  
HEARD SIMILAR COMMENTS CONCERNING HUEBNER, WHO NEVER  
TO OUR KNOWLEDGE MADE ANY COMMITMENT TO REMAIN IN THE  
GDR IF THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET OUT PRESENTED ITSELF.

6. WE WOULD NOTE THAT THE CRITICISM FROM WITHIN THE  
PARTY IS LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF  
EAST GERMANS WHO ARE UNCONCERNED WITH THE SED'S  
IDEOLOGICAL PURITY, OR LACK OF IT. IT SHOULD BE BORNE  
IN MIND THAT WHILE THERE EXIST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SED  
WHICH OBJECT, FOR IDEOLOGICAL OR OTHER REASONS, TO THE  
REGIME'S CONCESSIONS TO CONSUMER DEMANDS AND MIDDLE-  
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CLASS VALUES, THE GREAT BULK OF EAST GERMANS WOULD  
PROBABLY LIKE TO SEE MORE, NOT FEWER, CONSUMERIST  
POLICIES.

7. COMMENT: IN THE LEGAL DISPOSITION OF THESE TWO

CASES, THE REGIME IS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATING TO THE EAST GERMAN POPULACE, PARTY MEMBERS OR NOT, THAT IT RETAINS A STICK AS WELL AS A CARROT WITH WHICH TO ENSURE CONFORMITY. THE COERCIVE POWERS OF THE STATE HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED WITH SOME REGULARITY DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS TO CURB LIBERALIZING TENDENCIES WITHIN THE CREATIVE SECTOR OF THE SOCIETY: WRITERS, INTELLECTUALS, ARTISTS, ETC. THIS HAS GENERALLY TAKEN THE FORM OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUALS TO LEAVE, EXPULSIONS, STRIPPING OF CITIZENSHIP, ARRESTS, SOMETIMES FOLLOWED BY RANSOMING, AND PRESSURES FOR CONFORMITY WITHIN THE RELEVANT SEMI-OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS THE WRITERS UNION. IN DEALING WITH THE BAHRO AND HUEBNER CASES, THE REGIME HAS NOW DEMONSTRATED THAT IT IS WILLING TO EMPLOY MORE SEVERE FORMS OF COERCION. THE USE OF ESPIONAGE CHARGES AGAINST BAHRO IN PARTICULAR SHOULD BE AN INDICATION TO DISILLUSIONED PARTY MEMBERS THAT A DEEPLY THOUGHT-OUT "LOYAL OPPOSITION" IS REGARDED BY THE AUTHORITIES AS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE CRITICISMS OF SONG-WRITERS AND POETS. OUR INTERPRETATION OF THE SEVERITY OF THE SENTENCES FOR BAHRO AND HUEBNER AND THE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION GIVEN TO THEM IN THE OFFICIAL AND PARTY MEDIA IS THAT A CLEAR MESSAGE IS BEING COMMUNICATED TO PARTY CADRES, YOUNG AND OLD: DEVIATION WITHIN THE RANKS, AND ESPECIALLY IN WESTERN NEWSPRINT, WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. BOLEN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BOOK, ARRESTS, WRITERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780312-0165  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BERLIN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 BERLIN 6984, 77 BERLIN 7021  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1977615  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THE BAHRO AND HUEBNER CASES: VOICES OF DISSENT IN THE GDR  
**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, GC, (BAHRO, RUDOLF), (HUEBNER, NICO)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/b7def071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014